

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3349

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJ: ANALYSIS OF PORTUGUESE JOURNALISM: APRIL 25-

JULY 25, 1974

REF: A-93, AUGUST 6, 1964

1. SUMMARY: REFERENCE AIRGRAM IS A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE PORTUGUESE PRESS FROM THE COUP TO THE PRESENT. HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOW:

2. NINETY DAYS AFTER THE MILITARY COUP THAT ABOLISHED CENSORSHIP IN PORTUGAL, A NEW FORM OF CENSORSHIP IS IN FACT BEING APPLIED BY REPORTERS, EDITORS, AND COMMENTATORS, EVEN TYPESETTERS. NEWS REPORTING IN PORTUGAL IS BEING MANIPULATED IN FAVOR OF THE COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST PARTIES. EITHER BECAUSE OF POLITICAL CONVICTION OR OUT OF A SENSE OF GUILT AT NOT HAVING THE GUTS ACTIVELY TO OPPOSE THE SALAZAR/CAETANO REGIMES, THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO REPORT, EDIT, AND SHAPE THE NEWS IN PORTUGAL ARE DISCRIMINATING AGAINST THE MODERATES IN THE POLITICAL CENTER. IN SHORT, SOCIALISTS, COMMUNISTS AND EXTREME LEFTISTS HAVE A LOCK ON THE DAILY NEWS.

3. THOSE WHO DIFFER WITH THE LEFT-WING ELITES TODAY

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RUNNING THE MEDIA AND THOSE WHO QUESTION THE PURGES BEING

CONDUCTED OF PORTUGUESE INSTITUTIONS ARE CALLED "FASCISTS."
IT IS THE NEW CODE WORD TO SMEAR PEOPLE WITH WHOM ONE DISAGREES.

4. WEEKLY EXPRESSO, CONSIDERED BY MOST OBSERVERS THE BEST
EDITED NEWSPAPER IN PORTUGAL, WAS, BEFORE THE APRIL 25 COUP,
THE MOST LIBERAL OF THE MAJOR PAPERS PUBLISHED IN PORTUGAL.
TODAY IT IS THE LEAST RADICAL.

5. BANKS OWN NINE OF THE TEN PAPERS PUBLISHED IN
PORTUGAL. SOCIALIST REPUBLICA IS THE ONLY MAJOR DAILY NOT
OWNED BY A BANK. THE BANKERS ARE PARALYZED. THEY ARE SO
FAR EITHER UNWILLING OR AFRAID TO ACT TO RESTORE BALANCED NEWS
REPORTING.

6. EX-REPORTERS FOR SOCIALIST REPUBLICA NOW HAVE KEY
POSITIONS IN NATIONAL RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS.
THEY CAN AND DO MANIPULATE THE NEWS. THEY ARE NOT
FRIENDS OF THE UNITED STATES. BALANCED REPORTING IS NOT THEIR
LONG SUIT.

7. SCARCELY A DAY GOES BY THAT AN ALLEGED ACTIVITY OF THE
CIA IS NOT REPLAYED IN THE PORTUGUESE PRESS. THE CIA IS
RUMORED TO HAVE HUNDREDS OF AGENTS IN PORTUGAL. (SOME FEAR
THIS IS TRUE, OTHERS FERVENTLY HOPE SO.)

8. ANTI-COMMUNIST BACKLASH HAS BEGUN WHICH HAS CAUSED
A COUPLE OF UGLY INCIDENTS.

9. COMMENT: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS NOW SUPPOSED
TO BE GUARANTEED BY THE PROGRAM OF THE ARMED FORCES
MOVEMENT. PORTUGUESE COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS AND
MEMBERS OF THE EXTREME LEFT PAY GREAT LIP SERVICE TO
THE PRINCIPLE, BUT THEY REACT HARSHLY WHEN IT IS USED
AGAINST THEM.

10. THE LEFT KNOWS PERFECTLY WELL THAT WESTERN EUROPE
AND THE U.S. HAVE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN
PORTUGAL AND THEY CAN'T BELIEVE THE WEST WILL STAND BY
AND LET PORTUGUESE POLITICS BE ORGANIZED BY A COALITION
OF COMMUNISTS AND SOCIALISTS. THEY FEAR OUTSIDE
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INTERFERENCE, HENCE THE SCARE STORIES ABOUT THE CIA.

11. COMMENT: TO THE URGENT TASKS OF GOVERNMENT, ONE MAY
ADD THE MEDIA AS AN AREA DEMANDING VIGOROUS ATTENTION.
IN THE MINDS OF MANY THOUGHTFUL PORTUGUESE THE RESTORATION
OF BALANCE IN THE REPORTING AND PRESENTATION OF THE NEWS IS VITAL
TO THE SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT OF DEMOCRACY IN THIS COUNTRY.
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